



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
New Orleans District

# News Release

Public Affairs Office  
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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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## Corps blesses fleet in time-honored ceremony

**What:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District hosts its first Blessing of the Fleet Ceremony.

**When:** Wednesday, May 12, 9-11 a.m.

**Where:** 7400 Leake Ave.

**Why:** The time-honored maritime tradition is celebrated annually around the globe. The historical roots of the ceremony come from our ancestors' awe of the most powerful source found in nature – the ocean. They recognized how the ocean and waterways can be perilous. In an effort to counter the dangers, seafarers sought out divine intervention as a survival strategy in the hope of staying afloat and unscathed. This ceremony will also provide New Orleans District personnel with the opportunity to meet the captains and crewmembers, and learn more about the district's vessels and their capabilities.

**Who:** New Orleans District Engineer Col. Peter J. Rowan and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chaplain (Col.) Mark E. Fentress.

**Attendance:** The Blessing of the Fleet is an internal Corps of Engineers ceremony. Media are welcome. Contact: 862-2201.

**What's to see?** Corps of Engineers vessels will provide media with on-water camera shots. Crewmembers will provide tours and explain equipment on board various vessels (detailed fact sheet available):

Dredge Wheeler - The *Wheeler* is the largest hopper dredge ship in the United States, and the largest vessel in the U.S. Army. She is one of four "Federal Minimum Dredge Fleet" vessels of this type operated by the Corps of Engineers nationwide. Built in 1982, this 410-foot, 10,400-horsepower twin propeller diesel ship is used to maintain deep-draft navigation channels throughout the Gulf Coast.

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Launch Wheeler - Carried aboard the Dredge *Wheeler* and launched as needed, the Launch *Wheeler* is a 44-foot crew and survey boat used to transport personnel and supplies to and from the mother ship as well as conduct on-site hydrographic surveys.

M/V Kent - The M/V Kent supports the in-house maintenance work at our navigation and flood control structures through out the district, and is the primary mover of the Derrick Brownlee.

M/V Bienville - The M/V Bienville supports the in-house maintenance work at our navigation and flood control structures throughout the district.

M/V BOPP - Built in 1985, the vessel is used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying missions on the Mississippi River- Venice to the Gulf of Mexico, Southwest Pass Mississippi River and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet.

M/V BRETON - Built in 1984, the vessel is used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying missions in the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, Baptiste Collette, Tiger Pass and the Barataria Bay Waterway.

M/V GREYNA - Built in 1993, the vessel is used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying on the Mississippi River Deep Draft Crossings and the New Orleans Harbor.

M/V LABORDE - Built in January 1987, the vessel works out of the Venice sub-office and is used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying missions on the Mississippi River- Venice to the Gulf of Mexico, Southwest Pass of Mississippi and MRGO.

M/V LAFOURCHE - Our new Class 3 vessel was built in March 2002 as a survey boat operating at the Port Allen Locks, Port of Baton Rouge. The vessel is used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying missions on the Mississippi River Deep-Draft and Shallow-Draft Crossings.

W-46 - Built in December 1968, the vessel was transferred from the Drug Enforcement Administration in New Orleans to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New Orleans District in 1983. The vessel is used for reconnaissance and hydrographic surveying missions out of the Venice sub-office on the Mississippi River- Venice to the Gulf of Mexico, Southwest Pass Mississippi River and the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet.

OB-167 and OB-169 - The mission of the OB-167 and 169 is to perform single-beam and sonar hydrographic surveys within district waterways.

OB-109 - This vessel was modified to assist with dive operations. The vessel is mostly used for general work around IHNC Lock and to investigate marine accidents and damages.

OB-164 - Placed in service in 1997, the vessel is used for aquatic reconnaissance and contract inspection work.